

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Human Services Commission
Thursday, January 8, 2004
Kiva – City Hall

Present: Chairperson Diane Fausel, Vice-chair Dave Bachmann, Commissioners Brigita Bilsens, John Bitenc, Alik Coudroglou, Donna Reid, Seymour Resnick

Staff Present: Connie James, Valerie Kime-Trujillo, Cindy Ensign, and Phil Hershkowitz

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Fausel called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Bitenc moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of November 13, 2003 as submitted. Commissioner Resnick seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ELECTIONS OF COMMISSION CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Commission, election of a chairperson and vice-chairperson is to take place at the first meeting in January of each year. Those elected will take office immediately.

Chairperson Fausel called for nominations for Chairperson. Commissioner Bitenc nominated Chairperson Fausel for the office of Chairperson for the upcoming year. Commissioner Resnick seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Chairperson Fausel was elected unanimously to the office of Chairperson for 2004.

Chairperson Fausel nominated Vice-chair Bachmann to serve as Vice-chair for the upcoming year. Commissioner Bilsens seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. Vice-chair Bachmann was unanimously elected to the office of Vice-chair for 2004.

FAMILY ADVOCACY PRESENTATION

Connie James, Human Services Director, introduced the presentation on the Family Advocacy Center. The Commission had asked for an update on the center after it was in operation for one year.

HISTORY OF THE FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER

Sgt. Bruce Ciolli provided an introduction and the history of the Family Advocacy Center. Sgt. Ciolli said the center focuses on victims of abuse, sex crimes, and child crimes and operates with 14 detectives and other collaborations. The center is looking forward to working with Child Protective Services and having them in the building very soon. There will be 2 caseworkers assigned to the center. The center opened February 2003 and there have been many success stories. Many citizens have come to help. Sgt. Ciolli provided statistics on the number of cases served and gave some examples of outcomes. Letters have been received expressing families' appreciation for the services provided.

POLICE CRISIS INTERVENTION SERVICE RESPONSE

Tracey Wilkinson, M.S. provided information on Police Crisis Intervention Services response and role at the Family Advocacy Center. Ms. Wilkinson played a public service announcement for the Commission outlining the effects of domestic violence on children. Domestic violence is directly affecting our community. More than half of the homicides last year were related to domestic violence. The center is having an impact on this statistic. Ms. Wilkinson outlined what the center is doing to combat domestic violence. Ms. Wilkinson provided statistics on the number of cases served in 2002

and for the first nine months of 2003 since the center opened. The center is just now accumulating statistics on elder abuse.

FORENSIC EXAMS AND THE MEDICAL RESPONSE

Kim Yedowitz, F.N.E. was unable to be in attendance at this evening's meeting.

VICTIM SERVICES

JoAnn Del-Colle, C.I.S.W. provided the commission with information on Victims Services and their involvement at the Family Advocacy Center. Ms. Del-Colle advised the commission on what services were available in relation to counseling. Referrals are received from the police crisis staff. Procedures and policies have been implemented to ensure both the victim and the city are taken care of. The youngest referral was 5 years of age and the oldest was 60. Ms. Del-Colle shared some examples of what happens in the group counseling sessions.

FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Commissioner Bilsens asked how are services publicized to the general public. Sgt. Ciolli said most referrals are through the police officers on the street, calls, and from other centers. There is a support group, flyers are distributed, there is a website, and staff attended the Public Safety Day at Chaparral Park. Staff doesn't want abusers and suspects to come to the center so publicity is limited. Commissioner Bilsens noted that the name "Family Advocacy Center" does not truly indicate the nature of the services that are provided. This might be an opportunity to advertise the center in women's groups or churches that this is a safe to visit. Sgt. Ciolli said they would continue to expand the advertising in the future. Presentations are given to churches. Ms. Wilkinson noted other ways include a resource card that lists the phone numbers of social services in the community. On February 19 there will be a Faith Community Human Services presentation and the Staff of the center will be presenting.

Commissioner Bitenc asked if DES and protective services work at the center. Sgt. Ciolli said through the normal protocol there are assigned caseworkers that the center works with. Ms. Wilkinson noted the crisis unit works closely with the caseworkers and individuals at adult protective services in DES. Joint visits are often done. Commissioner Bitenc asked if this is supplemental to their role. Ms. Wilkinson said they work jointly to provide better service to the families and victims.

Commissioner Resnick asked, with the location, has there been any reaction from the neighbors. Sgt. Ciolli said the reaction has been very positive and does not impact the community. It runs like a doctor's office is, and is open from 7 to 5 but people are available for call out after hours. Parking in the area has not been impacted. Many victims and families express pleasure with the location. Staff is working with a fitness center across the street to contribute services to the center. Chairperson Fausel noted she sits on one of the advisory committees for DES and they speak favorably about the program.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT SUPPORT RESOLUTION

Connie James, Human Services Director, briefed the Commission on the Earned Income Tax Credit Program and M.A.G. initiatives.

Ms. James noted the EITC was approved in 1975 to get the money back into the hands of the working poor. She participated on a MAG committee that decided it would be a good opportunity to do a resolution at the MAG level. All the cities will be involved and working together. Last year 7,285 individuals in Scottsdale got \$8 million back as a result of EITC. There is \$14million available that they could receive.

Patrick Reidy, IRS Territory Manager of Arizona/New Mexico, gave an overview and history of EITC. The credit is obtained by filing tax return. Many people do not file due to a lack of knowledge and information. Most recipients use EITC to pay bills but other use it to open savings and investment accounts. The IRS is partnering with communities through the state for the initiative.

Sharon Taylor Ward, Senior Tax Specialist, noted the rewards are with the working folks. The Earned Income Tax Credit is designed to help reduce taxes or put money into a filer's pocket. A filer can receive an advance EITC through their employer. They are required to file a tax return to receive the credit. A pamphlet with the criteria was distributed in the commission packets. Ms. Taylor-Ward encouraged the commission to support this initiative.

Commissioner Bitenc asked if a person who is married and filing separately claim 2 children. Ms. Taylor Ward said a person who is married and filing separately does not qualify for EITC.

Chairperson Fausel encouraged viewers to take advantage of this important tax credit and finding out more information.

Chairperson Fausel read the resolution to support the promotion of the Earned Income Tax Credit program. By consensus the Commission supports the resolution as read.

STAFF AND COMMISSION UPDATES (A.R.S. §38-431.02(K))

Ms. James advised the Commission that the East Valley Needs Assessment Building Blocks for the future has been placed on the Human Services website and she invited the commissioners to view it. Copies will be distributed to the commission in the next few weeks. General Dynamics has printed posters for the Ready to Learn Program. The hope is to do some in Spanish. Ms. James reminded the commission of the next meeting on January 22, 2004 at Paiute. The CDBG, Scottsdale Cares and General Fund funding binders will be distributed.

Ms. Kime-Trujillo those interested in seeing if they are eligible for EIC funds there are 3 sites they can contact Civic Center Senior Center, Via Linda Senior Center, and Scottsdale Community College. Civic Center Senior Center began winter class registration January 5th. Senior Olympics preparation begins in January. The Community Assistance Office accepted Section 8 applications on November 12th with 561 individuals making application for that program. With regard to funding applications - there are 19 applications for CDBG funds, 4 applications for HOME funds, 8 General Fund applications, 25 Scottsdale Cares applications and 2 applications for Endowment funds. Paiute Neighborhood Center has a new drop in Tai Chi class. The Shop With A Cop Program was held on December 13th. They took 47 kids ages 10-15 that received \$200 and spend the day shopping with a police officer. There is a Creative Writing and Illustration Course funded by Phillips Petroleum. Via Linda Senior Center served 115 seniors through 165 donors in the Adopt A Senior Program. The center hosts a new Divorce Support Group. The Arthritis Foundation is offering a 6-week Arthritis Self Management Workshop. Vista Del Camino had a successful Thanksgiving program serving 442 families. The center served 500 adopted families for Christmas. Mayo Clinic and hospital conducted a drive at Zoo Lights and they donated over 10,000 pounds of food. Youth and Family Services received over \$1,000 in diversion fees. Staff is participating LINKS is alcohol reduction task force. Training will be provided to the Library staff on the Ready To Learn Program in January. The Mayor's Youth Council is meeting with the Courts staff in January.

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC (A.R.S. §38-431.02)

Chairperson Fausel called for any items from the floor. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bilsens moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bitenc seconded and the motion carried unanimously. With no further business to be brought before the Commission, Chairperson Fausel adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Meets established criteria.

Connie James, Director
Human Services